

LEADGATE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1920.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit the following Report to the Council on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the Leadgate District for the year 1920.

A memorandum has been issued to Medical Officers of Health for their guidance, and I have as far as possible drawn up this report in accordance with the order of the subjects covered by the memorandum.

In some sections of the report which follow, some of the information contained is similar to that contained in my report for 1919, but the Ministry of Health have again asked for this to be included.

The population of the district at the Census 1911 was 4,990.

The estimated population for 1920 is 5,330.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Urban powers were conferred upon your district in the year 1866, when it was constituted a Local Board.

The sub-soil of the district consists of clay, and there is a good natural drainage. The district, which covers an area of 1,721 acres, and occupies a very elevated and exposed position, includes, besides the town



of Leadgate, the village of Iveston and the collection of houses respectively known as East Castle, Crookhall, The Delves, and Redwell Hills. Practically all the adult male population is engaged in the coal-mining industry at the different collieries belonging to the Consett Iron Company. The majority of the houses in your area also belong to the above Company, and are occupied by the families of the workmen employed by them. There was no shortage of work at the collieries during the year, and consequently the number of persons requiring Poor Law relief was very small.

The following institutions in the neighbourhood are available for the gratuitous treatment of patients, namely, The Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne; the Poor Law Hospital at Lanchester; the Villa Real Hospital for the Treatment of Infectious Diseases; and the Consett Iron Company's Infirmary, which is used for the treatment of accidents to workmen employed by the Company at their different works and collieries.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The Ministry of Health, in furnishing to Medical Officers of Health the number of births and deaths, observes that these are the numbers registered during the calendar year, and are corrected for inward and outward transfers.

For calculating both the birth-rate and death-rate the Registrar General estimates the population of your district at 5,184.

The total number of births registered during the year was 163—78 males and 85 females—which gives an annual birth-rate of 31·4 per 1,000 inhabitants. This is the highest birth-rate in your district for the past five years. Only 6 births were illegitimate. In 1919 the birth-rate was 27·5, in 1918, 30·6, and in 1917 the birth-rate was 22·5.

The birth-rate for all England and Wales in 1920 was 25·4.

The total number of deaths registered in 1920 was 70—40 males and 30 females—giving an annual death-rate of 13·5 per 1,000. In 1919 the death-rate was 13·8, in 1918, 16·4, and in 1917 13·1 per 1,000.

The death-rate for all England and Wales in 1920 was 12·4 per 1,000 of the total population.

The following table shows the causes of death for the year 1920 in the Leadgate Urban District:—

CAUSES OF DEATH.	MALES.	FEMALES.
Whooping Cough	1	1
Diphtheria	1	1
Influenza	1	0
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	5	0
Tubercular Meningitis	0	1
Other Tubercular Diseases	1	0
Cancer	3	4
Heart Disease	6	2
Bronchitis and other Respiratory Diseases	3	4
Pneumonia	4	3
Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	1	2
Appendicitis	1	0
Nephritis and Bright's Disease	1	1
Congenital Debility	3	2
Violence apart from Suicide	2	0
Other defined Diseases	7	9
Total	40	30

The quarterly death-rate for the year 1920 was as follows :—1st quarter, 14·5 ; 2nd quarter, 13·6 ; 3rd quarter, 9·7 ; and 4th quarter, 12·1 per 1,000.

The Infantile quarterly death-rate for the same period was :—1st quarter, 96·1 ; 2nd quarter, 125 ; 3rd quarter, 31·2 ; and 4th quarter, 97·5 per 1,000 births.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

16 deaths of children under 1 year were registered, equal to an Infantile death-rate of 98·1 per 1,000 births. In 1919, the infantile death-rate was 111·8 ; in 1918, 74·8 ; and in 1917 the rate was 118·5 per 1,000 births.

The following table shows the number of cases of each disease, the ages at which death occurred, and the causes of death in each case :—

	Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 1 month.	1-6 months.	6-9 months.	9-12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year
Convulsions	1	2	...	...	3	...	...	...	2
Bronchitis ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	3
Premature Birth	3	1	...	...	4	...	...	...	4
Diarrhoea ... ..	...	...	1	...	1	1	1	...	3
Whooping Cough ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
Other Causes ... ..	...	1	1	...	2	...	...	...	2

It will be seen from above table that 10 deaths of a total of 16 occurred within 4 weeks of birth.

Premature birth and infantile mortality in the first few months of life depend practically altogether on the health of the mother.

The chief measures of prevention to limit infantile mortality are improved sanitary conditions, attention to domestic cleanliness, education of girls and mothers in personal hygiene, instruction in the proper feeding of infants, and above all, attention to the health of the mother.

The Infantile death-rate for all England and Wales during the year 1920 was 80 per 1,000 births.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER.—There was a good supply of excellent water for all domestic and sanitary purposes from the Waskerley Water-works, owned by the Weardale and Consett Water Company. The supply was constant, and there was no contamination. The Durham County Council are applying for the rights to control this Company, and intend making extensions. No pollution of rivers or streams was discovered.

DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE.—The drainage of the district is satisfactory, and the greater part of the sewage is treated at the Sewage Disposal Works situated to the north-west, about a quarter-of-a-mile from Leadgate. The works consist of settling tanks and a double set of contact beds. The results are satisfactory, a good effluent being regularly obtained. These works are visited very frequently by your Inspector to see that everything is in order. The main drains are all constructed of sanitary pipe, and are well ventilated.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.—A comparison of the different types of closets existing in the district in 1913, 1919, and 1920 is shown in the following table :—

Year.	Ashpit Privies.	Ash-closets.	Water-closets.
1913	419	104	143
1919	378	115	197
1920	372	115	203

As will be seen from above, 6 ashpit privies have been converted into water-closets during the year

SCAVENGING.—Scavenging has been satisfactorily carried out by a contractor, who is responsible to your Sanitary Inspector for the performance of the work. The tip where the refuse is disposed of is sufficiently removed from all dwellings to prevent any nuisance arising. In the immediate future it is the intention of the Council to take over the whole of the scavenging under their own control.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF DISTRICT.—This is regularly carried out both by your Medical Officer of Health and your Sanitary Inspector. During the year 300 houses have been inspected, and any defects found are reported to you at your monthly meetings by your Inspector or in special reports by your Medical Officer.

All the notices served were of an informal kind, and many improvements to properties were carried out as the result of conferences between your Inspector and the owners.

Two formal notices were served on owners to abate a nuisance arising in water-closets, which were then remedied.

Inspection of Factories, Workshops, and Workplaces.

		<i>Inspections.</i>	<i>Notices.</i>	<i>Prosecutions.</i>
Factories	...	12	nil	nil
Workshops	...	25	nil	nil
Workplaces	...	nil	nil	nil
		—	—	—
Total	...	37	nil	nil

No defects were found at time of inspection either as regards cleanliness, ventilation, overcrowding, or sanitary accommodation.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS AND REGULATIONS.—Bakelhouse, 1; Joiners, etc., 2; Boot Repairers, 3; Blacksmiths, 2; Painter, 1; Tailor, 1; Motor Repairer, 1; Cowsheds and Milkshops, 20; Slaughter Houses, 7.

All the above have been regularly inspected, and have always been found in a satisfactory condition.

There are no offensive trades carried on, and there is no public abattoir in your district.

SCHOOLS.—All the schools in your area have sufficient water-closets, and a plentiful supply of water except one. Disinfection is carried out during the different holidays, and also if any epidemic of infectious disease should arise.

FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.—About 20 small dairies now supply milk to the district, and their premises have been inspected regularly, and found to be kept clean. The milk is good, and no tuberculous cows are known to exist. The Mothers and Children Milk Order, 1919, is carried out by means of the Health Visitor, who attends to any necessitous cases.

A new dairy and cowshed is to be built at Crookhall Farm.

MEAT.—No butcher meat was condemned during the year. The Slaughter Houses are regularly visited and inspected. A thorough inspection of all meat at the time of slaughter is next to impossible as there is no public abattoir in the district, and the slaughter houses, in addition to being situated apart from each other, have no fixed time for slaughtering. No tuberculous meat was seen at any of the regular inspections.

Number of Registered Slaughter Houses in use in the District.—In 1914, 7; January, 1920, 7; December, 1920, 7.

OTHER FOODS.—Two lots of unwholesome food were condemned as unfit for human consumption, and no prosecutions were taken against anyone for exposing or selling any food unfit for use.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.—The Inspectors for this purpose are appointed by, and are under the control of, the County Council.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

50 cases of Infectious Disease were notified in your district during the year. The following table shows the number of cases of each disease notified, the ages of occurrence, and the number removed to Infectious Hospital.

	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1-5 years.	5-10 years.	10-20 years.	20-40 years.	40-70 years.	Sent to Hospital.
Scarlet Fever	16	..	2	8	6	..	..	14
Diphtheria	19	..	8	6	3	2	..	15
Tuberculosis	10	..	..	1	2	5	2	..
Erysipelas	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	..
Pneumonia	2	..	..	..	..	2	..	..
Ophthalmia	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..

SCARLET FEVER.—16 cases were notified. 6 occurred in the first half of the year and 10 in the latter part. They were equally distributed throughout the district. 14 of the cases were removed to the Infectious Hospital, and no fatal cases occurred. Thorough disinfection of the houses is carried out in every case.

DIPHTHERIA.—There were 19 cases of Diphtheria notified during the year, and 15 were removed to Infectious Hospital. 2 fatal cases occurred. No cases were reported during the months of April, May, June, and July. In the first three months of the year 9 cases occurred, and 10 during the last five months. Inspection of the houses and thorough disinfection is carried out as is done in the Scarlet Fever cases.

Diphtheria Anti-toxin, which is supplied, is used in practically all cases.

TUBERCULOSIS.—9 cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and 1 case of Tubercular Disease of the knee were notified during the year. 7 deaths were returned as being due to Tuberculosis. The local Tuberculosis Dispensary, situated at Consett, is regularly attended and Sanatorium treatment is provided for all suitable cases whenever possible. Bacteriological aid to diagnosis is largely used by the Medical Practitioners of the district, and is carried out for the Durham County Council by the College of Medicine, Newcastle-on Tyne.

Only 1 case of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, which recovered, was reported during the year, and the district was entirely free from Typhoid Fever, Small Pox, Puerperal Fever, and Eucephalitis Lethargica.

56 houses have been disinfected during the year.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

STAFF.—Medical Officer of Health and Surveyor, who is also the Inspector of Nuisances.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—Your district is part of the Lanchester Joint Hospital Area and patients suffering from Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, or Typhoid Fever, are treated at the Villa Real Infectious Hospital. Provision is made for the isolation and treatment of any cases of Small Pox occurring in the Lanchester Area, in an hospital used solely for this purpose, and situated at Maiden Law, near Lanchester.

ADOPTIVE ACTS in force in your area.—Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1889 ; Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890 ; Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, (Part III) ; Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907, (Parts II, III, IV, and VI) ; Public Libraries Act, 1892 ; Public Libraries Act, Amendment Act, 1893.

BYE-LAWS.—New Streets and Buildings, 1916 ; Slaughter Houses, 1896 ; Prevention of Nuisances, 1896 ; Common Lodging Houses, 1896 ; Cleansing of Footways, Ashpits, &c., 1896 ; Regulation respecting Dairies, Cowsheds, &c., 1896.

Your Surveyor, who also acts as Inspector of Nuisances, and devotes his whole time to these offices, makes monthly reports to your Sanitary Committee.

HOUSING.

It is estimated that 240 new houses are required in your area. Plans have already been passed for 168 new houses to be erected by the Consett Iron Company and 16 of these are now nearing completion. Plans have also been approved for 84 four-roomed bungalows and it is the intention of your Council to build 70 four and five-roomed houses in the immediate future.

No important changes in the population took place during the year, nor is any anticipated in the future.

OVERCROWDING.—The amount of overcrowding in your area is very pronounced and is on the increase. At least, 200 houses have more than two occupants per room and many houses are inhabited by more than one family. The fact that no new houses have been built for a number of years and so many two-roomed houses existing in the district are the main causes of this overcrowding. The new houses at present in course of erection and those to be built in the near future will solve the difficulty. In a few cases during the year, large families have exchanged into larger houses.

FITNESS OF HOUSES.—Energetic action is called for as soon as possible to improve the housing accommodation of your district as the existing standard is very low.

The general character of defects found to exist in the two-roomed houses are—bad state of repairs as regards roof and floors, both kitchen and attics have insufficient light, and the surroundings at the back are insanitary. I understand that all this old property is to be rebuilt on modern lines as soon as a sufficiency of new houses have been erected, and it is to be hoped that in a very few years all these two roomed houses will have disappeared.



APPENDICES.

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

STATISTICS

Year ended 31st December, 1920.

1.—GENERAL.

(1) Estimated population	...	...	...	5300
(2) General death-rate	...	...	...	13.5
(3) Death-rate from tuberculosis	...	...	...	1.3
(4) Infantile mortality	...	...	...	98.1
(5) Number of dwelling-houses of all classes	...	...	...	1069
(6) Number of working-class dwelling-houses	...	...	...	1021
(7) Number of new working-class houses erected	...	...	...	—

2.—UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.

I.—Inspection.

(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	—
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	...	...	...	300
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	—
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	12

II.—Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notices.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	54
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The particulars under headings III (Action under Statutory Powers), and 3 (Unhealthy Areas) are nil.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN MURRAY, M.B., BCh.,

Medical Officer of Health.

The Hawthorns, Blackhill,

March 15th, 1921.

